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Letter dated 15 September 2006 from the Permanent Representatives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We have the honour to address you as President of the Security Council for the month of September in the matter of the selection of the next Secretary-General.

Upon the instructions of our respective Governments, we wish to submit for consideration by the Security Council for the post of Secretary-General the candidature of the President of the Republic of Latvia, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga.

The President of Latvia has been Head of State since 1999, in which time she has gained extensive experience in global affairs. Coming from a relatively small country which has recently undergone the transition from totalitarian rule to freedom and democracy, the President highly values the role of multilateral diplomacy in preventing and minimizing threats to global peace, security and prosperity.

The President of Latvia has proved the capacity of a woman to lead and inspire a nation. The favourable consideration of President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga for the post of Secretary-General would be a tangible demonstration of the principle of gender equality, so tirelessly defended by the United Nations over the past 60 years.

We attach hereto a biographical note on Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga (see annex).

(*Signed*) Tiina **Intelmann**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Solveiga **Silkalna**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Dalius **Čekuolis**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 15 September 2006 from the Permanent Representatives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Biographical details of the President of the Republic of Latvia

Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga

Professional career (1965-1999)

From 1965 to 1998 Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga was a professor at the Department of Psychology of the French-speaking University of Montreal. She taught psychopharmacology, psycholinguistics, scientific theories, experimental methods, language and cognitive processes. Her experimental research, supported by grants from the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), focused on memory processes and language, and the influence of drugs on cognitive processes. She has supervised the theses of many Master's and Doctoral students.

At the same time she did scholarly research on semiotics, poetics and the structural analysis of computer-accessible texts from an oral tradition — the Latvian folksongs (*Dainas*). Her research (jointly with her husband, informatics professor Imants Freibergs) was supported by grants from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Together they published a book and a database on the Latvian Sun-songs in 1988.

During this period she authored nine books and about 160 articles, essays or book chapters and has given over 250 speeches, allocutions and scientific communications in English, French or Latvian. Some articles have been translated into Swedish, Polish, Russian, German and Lithuanian. She gave numerous radio, TV and press interviews in various languages. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga is a member of the Writers' Union of Latvia (2004).

Since 1957, Dr. Vīķe-Freiberga has been actively engaged in community service, focusing on questions of Latvian identity and culture, and the political future of the Baltic States. She became a specialist of Latvian folklore and encouraged young Latvians to learn about their cultural heritage. She has been a lecturer, director and president of the Board of Directors of the Latvian Cultural Heritage Seminars for university-level participants (1965-85) and subsequently for families, in North and South America, Europe and Australia. A renowned public speaker, she was regularly invited to cultural and social events and published many articles on these questions in Latvian, English and French.

Administrative experience (until 1999)

- Member of Council (1994-98) and **President** of the Academy I of the Royal Society of Canada (1998-99)
- Member of the Killam Research Fellowships and Prizes Selection Committee (1995-98), appointed by the Canada Council
- Member of the Science Council of Canada (1980-83) and **Vice-president** (1984-89), appointed by the Governor General of Canada; invited Consultant

by the Commission of constitutional reform of the Brazilian Parliament (1989); member of a Canadian governmental consultative committee on the disposal of nuclear waste (1990-91, 1995-96)

- Member of the Board of directors (1982-88) and **President** (1984-86) of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies — AABS
- Member of the Consultative committee on Mental Health Research, Health and Welfare Canada (1983-86)
- Member and president of organising committees of various national and international symposia and conferences (1982-86)
- Member of the Board and Executive Committee of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities (1980-82)
- Appointed Canadian member and **Chair** of the Special Panel on Human Factors of the NATO Scientific programme in Brussels (1978-81)
- Member of the Board of directors (1976-82) and **President** (1980-81) of the Canadian Psychological Association
- Member of the Board of directors (1977-82) and **President** (1980-81) of the Social Science Federation of Canada
- Member of the Post-doctoral Fellowship Selection Committee of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (1975-78)
- Member of various committees at the University of Montreal (1965-98)

Prizes and honours (until 1999)

- Elected full Member, Academy of Sciences of Latvia, 1999
- Grand Medal of the Latvian Academy of Sciences for distinguished work on oral literature and Latvian folksongs, 1997
- Pierre Chauveau Medal for distinguished work in the humanities, Royal Society of Canada, 1995
- Officer of the Order of the Three Stars, Republic of Latvia, 1995
- Killam Research Fellowship (Canada Council), 1993-95
- Marcel-Vincent prize for distinguished achievement in the social sciences, ACFAS (Association canadienne-français pour l'avancement des sciences), 1992
- Dr. habil. philol., Latvian Academy of Sciences, 1992
- Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* (LL.D.), Queen's University, Kingston, Canada, 1991
- Elected Fellow of Academy I of the Royal Society of Canada, 1990
- Elected Foreign Member, Academy of Sciences of Latvia, 1990
- Prize in the social sciences of the World Association of Free Latvians (PBLA, Washington, D.C.) for distinguished work on the Latvian *Dainas*, 1989
- Elected Fellow, Canadian Psychological Association, 1979

- Prof. Anna Abele memorial prize (USA) for distinguished work in Latvian philology, jointly with Imants Freibergs, 1979
- Leave Fellowship, Canada Council, 1974-75

Presidency of the Republic of Latvia (since 1999)

On 17 June 1999, Prof. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga was elected President of the Republic of Latvia by the Parliament (*Saeima*) and was sworn in on 8 July. In 2003 she was re-elected for a second term of four years with 88 votes out of 96.

She was named Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on the reform of the United Nations in 2005.

Member of the Council of Women World Leaders since 1999.

Powers exercised by the President

- The power to name the Prime Minister (exercised five times so far).
- The President is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Latvia and names the Commander of the armed forces.
- Legislative powers: she has initiated and submitted to Parliament the law to institute the Office of Ombudsman, the law on State awards and decorations, initiated several changes to the Criminal code and has collaborated with parliamentary commissions in drafting many other laws.
- The right to veto: The possibility to return any law passed by the Parliament with a reasoned request for reconsideration. This veto has been exercised on over twenty occasions, thus ensuring better quality legislation (laws on language, commerce, public organisations, elections, municipal budgets, sales of alcoholic beverages, to name a few).
- The right to grant clemency to criminals. As Head of the Clemency Board, the President regularly examines requests for clemency (over 100 each year) and has reduced prison terms in dozens of cases.
- The President heads the National Security Council, the Military Council, and the Commission on State Awards (until 2004).
- A number of Commissions operate under the auspices of the President: on strategic analysis, on the state language, on state awards and heraldry, the International Commission of Historians, the Commission on State Awards (since 2004).
- The President meets regularly with the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, mayors and officials of municipalities, heads of government departments and agencies, as well as members of civil society to focus on functional or actual problems and solutions under their jurisdiction.
- The President regularly visits towns and villages to meet the population in person, to familiarize herself with their social situation and to listen to their concerns. She also receives many thousands of letters yearly from the inhabitants.

- The President has been outspoken regarding a number of social causes (reform of the Justice system, children's rights, women's rights, prisoners' rights, drug trafficking, corruption, etc.) and has agreed to patronise various non-governmental cultural, social, and sports organisations and events.

Participation and presentations at significant international events (among others)

- Participation and invited address at the Tällberg Forum, Sweden, 2006
- Invited address to the Joint meeting of the US Congress, Washington, USA, 17 June 2006
- Participation at the EU-Latin America/Caribbean Summit of Heads of State, Vienna, Austria (2006), Guadalajara, Mexico (2004)
- Participation at the informal gatherings of EU presidents, Dresden, Germany (2006), Helsinki, Finland (2005), Lisbon, Portugal (2003)
- Participation at the Conference "The Sound of Europe" on the future of Europe, European values, identity and culture, Salzburg, Austria, 28 January 2006
- Participation in the Ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Moscow, Russia, 9 May 2005
- Invited presentation at the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security, Club of Madrid, Spain, 2005
- Participation in the International Forum and Ceremony in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Liberation of the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, Krakow and Oswiecim, Poland, 27 January 2005
- Invited allocution at the l'Oreal/UNESCO Prize-giving Ceremony for Women in Science, Paris, 2004
- Invited presentation at the International Forum on Preventing Genocide, Stockholm, 2004
- Presentations at the United Nations World Summits on Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, 2003, and in Tunis, 2005
- Signing of the European Union Treaty of Accession in Athens, 2003
- Invited address to the French Senate in Paris, 2003
- Addresses at NATO Summits in Prague, 2002, and in Istanbul, 2004
- Presentations at the General Assemblies of the United Nations in New York, 1999-2005
- Invited presentations at the Women's Service Club *Zonta International* in Stockholm and the *Women Business Leaders* in Helsinki, 2002, and in Riga, 2004
- Invited presentation at the Conference on Democratic Transition and Consolidation, Club of Madrid, 2001
- Invited presentation at the Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR on the Status of Refugees, Geneva, 2001

- Presentations at the United Nations World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, 2001
- Participation to the European Economic Summit in Salzburg, Austria, 2001
- Invited presentation at the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, 2000
- Invited presentation at the International Conference "Women and Democracy", Iceland, 1999
- Regularly invited participant to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, since 2000
- Regularly invited participant to the annual meetings of the *American Academy of Achievement* in USA, UK and Ireland, since 2000

Medals and awards (since 2000)

- "Small Countries Prize" of the Batliner European Institute in Salzburg, Austria (2006)
- Dutch bulb growers BulbRights BV new tulip species named "President Vaira", Riga, 2006
- Baltic Statesmanship Award of the U.S.-Baltic Foundation, Washington, DC, 2006
- Hannah Arendt Prize for Political Thought, Bremen, Germany, 2005
- Medal of the American Jewish Committee dedicated to "a passionate friend of humanity's abiding values", New York, 2005
- Medal of Freedom of the Baltic American Freedom League, Washington, DC, 2005
- Forbes Executive Women's Forum Trailblazer Award, New York, 2005
- Award of Distinction of the Canadian Psychological Association, section on Women and Psychology, St. John's, Newfoundland, 2004
- Medal of the Foundation Edouard-Montpetit of the University of Montreal, 2004
- Gold Medal of the Free University of Berlin, Germany, 2003
- Grand Prize of Folklore, Ministry of Culture, Republic of Latvia, 2003
- Gold Medal of Georgetown University, Washington, USA, 2002
- Medal, Prize and Title of "Honorary Senator and Protector" of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, Salzburg, Austria, 2001
- American Academy of Achievement Gold Plate Award, London, 2000

Orders of Merit, 1st class (since 1999)

- Order of the Princess St. Olga Equal-to-the-Apostles, 1st class, Patriarchy of Moscow and All Russia, 2006

- Order of the Netherlands Lion, Grand Cross with Collar, Kingdom of Netherlands, 2006
- Order of the Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise, 1st class, Republic of Ukraine, 2006
- Order of the White Star with Collar, Republic of Estonia, 2005
- Commander of the Cross of Merit with Star, Republic of Poland, 2005
- Royal Order of Seraphim with Collar, Kingdom of Sweden, 2005
- Order of the White Double Cross, Republic of Slovakia, 2005
- Collar of the Order of *Isabel la Catolica*, Kingdom of Spain, 2004
- Grand Cross with Collar of the Order of Merit, Republic of Italy, 2004
- National Order of Merit with Collar, Republic of Malta, 2004
- Order of *Stara Planina*, Republic of Bulgaria, 2003
- Grand Cross of the Order of *Infante Dom Henrique* with Grand Collar, Republic of Portugal, 2003
- Grand Cross of Merit, Special Class, Federal Republic of Germany, 2003
- Order of Merit of the White Eagle, Republic of Poland, 2003
- Gold Medal of Freedom, Republic of Slovenia, 2002
- Grand Cross of Merit with Collar, Republic of Romania, 2001
- Commander of the Legion of Honour, 1st Class, Republic of France, 2001
- Cross of the Order of Merit with Collar, Republic of Hungary, 2001
- Grand Cross of the Order of White Rose with Collar, Republic of Finland, 2001
- Order of Merit *Vytautas Dizas*, 1st Class with Collar, Republic of Lithuania, 2001
- Grand Cross of the Order of the Redeemer, Republic of Greece, 2000
- Grand Cross of the Order of St. Olav, Kingdom of Norway, 2000
- Order of Merit *Terra Mariana*, 1st Class with Collar, Republic of Estonia, 2000
- Grand Commander of the Order of Three Stars, Republic of Latvia, 1999

Honorary Doctorates (since 2000)

- Dr.h.c. of the State University in Yerevan, Armenia, 2005
- Dr.h.c. of the State University in Tbilisi, Georgia, 2005
- Dr.h.c. of the State University in Baku, Azerbaijan, 2005
- Dr.h.c. of the Eurasian National University in Astana, Kazakhstan, 2004
- Dr.sci.h.c. of McGill University in Montreal, Canada, 2002

- Dr.h.c. of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, 2002
- Dr.h.c. of the University of Latvia in Riga, 2000
- Dr.h.c. of Sacred Letters, Victoria University in the University of Toronto, Canada, 2000

Books authored by Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga

- *Saules balsi* [Latvian Sun Song Melodies. Selected and commented by Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga. (In Latvian and English)] (ISBN 9984-505-82-0). 151 p. Rīga: Karogs, 2005.
- *Trejādās saules: III. Meteoroloģiskā saule. Siltā saule* [The Threefold Sun, Vol. III: The Meteorological Sun. The Warm Sun] (ISBN 9984-505-71-5). 176 p. Rīga: Karogs, 2002.
- *Trejādās saules: II. Hronoloģiskā saule* [The Threefold Sun, Vol. II: The Chronological Sun] (ISBN 9984-505-52-9). 296 p. Rīga: Karogs, 1999.
- *Trejādās saules: I. Kosmoloģiskā saule* [The Threefold Sun, Vol. I: The Cosmological Sun]. (An analysis of the themes of content in Latvian folksongs about the sun) (ISBN 9984-505-40-5). 240 p. Rīga: Karogs, 1997.
- *Pret straumi* [Against the current. Essays on Latvian identity 1968-1991]. (ISBN 0-9693501-6-3). 256 p. Helios: Montreal, 1993. 2nd edition. (ISBN 9984-505-25-1). Rīga: Karogs, 1995.
- *Dzintara kalnā* [On the Amber Mountain. Essays on Latvian folk songs]. (ISBN 0-9693501-2-0) 193 p. Montreal: Helios, 1989. Revised 2nd edition (ISBN 5-405-00949-0). 179 p. Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1993.
- *Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Folk Songs*. Vaira Vīķis-Freibergs (ed.) (ISBN 0-7735-0661-6). 371 p. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.
- *Saules dainas*. [Latvian Sun Songs], with Imants Freibergs. (ISBN 0-9693501-0-4). 266 p. Montreal: Helios, 1988. Revised 2nd edition (ISBN 5-85800-001-0). Rīga: Grāmata, 1991.
- *La fréquence lexicale au Québec*. Vaira Vīķis-Freibergs. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1974.

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- Māris Čaklais. *Izaicinājums*. [A Challenge: First woman president of Latvia Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga.] (ISBN 9984-33-062-1). 370 p. Rīga: Pētergailis, 2003.
- Nadine Vitols-Dixon. *Le Parcours d'une Vie*: Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, Présidente de Lettonie. [In French]. (ISBN 9984-33-141-5). 191 p. Rīga: Pētergailis, 2005.
- Finnish translation [*Meripihkahelmi povella* Latvian presidentti Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga]. 215 p., 2006.
- English translation [A Life's Journey: Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga]. (ISBN 9984-33-174-1). 227 p., 2006.